Potentially Paternal

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/23018461.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationships:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter, Will Graham & Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Hannibal Lecter, Will Graham, Jack Crawford
Additional Tags:	Caring Hannibal Lecter, Protective Hannibal Lecter, Confused Will Graham, Shy Will Graham, working on cases together, Therapy, Childhood Memories, Tending to Wounds, analysing feelings, Fluff, Massage, Daddy Issues, Daddy Hannibal, Little Will Graham, maybe? Not really aha but it kinda touches on it, Mentions of Will's real dad, Dom/sub Undertones, maybe? Kind of?, Hannibal thinks Will has daddy issues, Basically, and Hannibal is more than happy to delve into it, and do daddy things, Sharing Clothes, Feeding, Feeding Kink, soothing, Dressing, Pining, sleep over, Intimacy, Non-Sexual Intimacy, Non-Sexual Age Play, Touch-Starved, Touch-Starved Will Graham
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2020-03-04 Words: 11,882 Chapters: 5/?

Potentially Paternal

by ThighHighAnon

Summary

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“You speak little of your father.” Hannibal observed during one of Will’s therapy sessions.

Will had never spoken poorly of him but he’d also never sung his praises. It was hard to know what their relationship was like.

“You’ve asked me about my mother once and now we’re onto my father.. wading into family waters once more. Should I point out the type of psychiatry this is, again?”

Hannibal smirked softly, “Lazy, I know. And yet I still find myself eager for a response that is not a deflection.”

— Hannibal thinks Will has some ‘issues’ regarding paternal figures.

Chapter 1

“You speak little of your father.” Hannibal observed during one of Will’s therapy sessions.

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“You’ve asked me about my mother once and now we’re onto my father.. wading into family waters once more. Should I point out the type of psychiatry this is, again?”

Hannibal smirked softly, “Lazy, I know. And yet I still find myself eager for a response that is not a deflection.”

Will huffed a laugh under his breath and tried not to roll his eyes.

“We were never wealthy and sometimes struggled but I have fond memories with him. He always tried his best.”

“I imagine his best was frequently not enough.”

Will shrugged his shoulders ever so slightly and let his eyes wander around the room.

“The constant moving around must have been difficult - no stability there. No real home. Only a house. A place to stay for a short while until it was time to move on again.”

“It could be exciting..” Will said unconvincingly.

“It could be. For another child maybe. But not for you.”

Will met Hannibal’s eyes.

“How difficult it must have been for a young boy such as yourself learning that his mind was not the same as his classmates. That he was different. I imagine your father was not very understanding of your gift.”

“He didn’t call it a gift.” Will said under his breath, breaking the eye contact.

Hannibal hummed thoughtfully.

“A mind that never settles paired with a family that never settles. Not a good mix.”

“Not the best, no. But people have it worse. My dad was always busy trying to find work and I sometimes had to fend for myself. Sometimes food was scarce, and clothes had holes, but I was cared for. And my father never judged my empathy disorder, or scolded me for it. He simply didn’t understand it.”

“So what did he scold you for?”

Will thought for a second before answering.
“I got lost once, following a stray dog. I wanted to bring it home with me to feed it but it was scared. I only followed it for a short while, trying to speak gently. But apparently I lost track of where I was because when I looked up I didn’t recognise my surroundings. I heard my dad calling me and I ran to him, all excited about this dog that I’d seen. He wasn’t excited. He seemed panicked, grounded me for a month and told me that there wasn’t enough food around to go feeding stray dogs. I know that really he was just worried and angry and didn’t mean a whole lot of what he said. But it hurt when he told me to grow up and start focusing on important things, not chasing dogs around. I was only 8. And I don’t see how the dog wasn’t important.”

Will spoke with emotion and detail, remembering it like it was yesterday.

Hannibal listened with fascination at the story that Will had chosen to answer his question with. He also smiled softly at the way Will’s accent made itself much more known as he spoke of his childhood.

“A very specific memory. Thank you for sharing it with me. Forgive me for being so forward but I find it to be very sweet that your love for dogs has been present since such a young age. Your loyalty to them is as strong as their loyalty to you.” Hannibal smiled as he spoke and his words were kind.

It made Will feel better about the fact that he had exposed a memory from his childhood. He usually didn’t like to talk too much about it.
He didn’t really know what to say, though. So just, almost shyly, smiled back at Hannibal instead.

Strange, how speaking of our childhood can make us subtly act more child-like. As though by recounting memories we transfer ourselves back there. Back to our younger self.
Will had begun to twiddle his thumbs and felt smaller somehow.
Not helped by Hannibal’s large presence in the room. He was dressed expensively and handsomely. Tall, sophisticated, and well put together. And in that moment Will felt vulnerable and exposed. Small. It was a contrast of which he didn’t know how to feel about.

When Hannibal spoke it was with a deep and heavily accented voice, made to sound gentle and supportive, “Did you find yourself trying to please him often, altering your natural behaviour to do so?”

“Doesn’t every child?”

“Not every child carries the belief that they should ignore their own needs to please others into adulthood.”

“Are you suggesting that’s what I’ve done?”

“It’s what you do everyday, with uncle jack.”

Will was a little thrown. And wasn’t sure what to say at first. But Hannibal didn’t rush him, only sat quietly while Will tried to form a response.

“I follow orders, something every employee does, regardless of job type. And I help people.”

“You frequently push yourself beyond your limits, way beyond them, and do more than any other person would expect of you. But because it is Jack that expects it, you do it. You crave his approval.” Hannibal corrects.

“All people want points from the boss.” Will replied weakly.

Hannibal smiles softly, “Do you really see him as just a boss? Or a paternal figure that you need to impress?”

“I don’t-“

“If only he would give you the support, comfort, and praise that you so desire.”

Will stares at Hannibal and furrows his brow.
For a while he just looks, searching his mind for the right way to disprove his words.

He can’t think of anything to say.

“Can we move on?” Will says eventually.

And of course, Hannibal courteously changes the subject.

He must wait for the right time to bring this up again. Must wait for Will to be ready.

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Will hadn’t seen Hannibal for a few days. He’d been busy with Jack Crawford and had little time. Hannibal was disappointed that both Jack and Will would put his work before his sessions and thus before his mental health, but he said nothing. He knew how important Will’s job was to him and no matter how many times he tried to convince Will that he was more important than any task Jack could give him, it would always fall on deaf ears.

So when Hannibal sees him a few days later, he is shocked to see a small cut just above Will’s cheekbone. It looks sore and untreated, no surprise there, but Will seems to ignore its existence as he greets Hannibal.

Hannibal would usually describe himself as rude for how he ignores Will’s words. But he is distracted by the small wound.

“You’re hurt.” He says with some shock and concern. Completely ignoring Will’s greeting.

“Oh this,” Will gestures to his face, “It’s nothing, just someone that was a little reluctant to be arrested by the fbi.
She had a good right hook.” Will explains with a lighthearted chuckle.

“It’s fine, just managed to throw a punch and shove me about a bit. My shoulder was playing up before but I think it’s fine now.”

“The wound on your face hasn’t been tended to. I can tell.” Hannibal says in response.

“It doesn’t need to be, it’s just a small cut. It’ll heal by itself.” Will says flippantly as he enters the room properly and heads for his usual chair.

Hannibal doesn’t sit down as Will does though, he heads to a nearby cabinet and pulls out his brown leather medical bag.
Will can’t help but roll his eyes as his realises what Hannibal is doing. He tries not to sigh when he says, “That’s really not necessary.”

But he can’t deny that he smiles a little at Hannibal’s display of worry for him.

“I’ll just clean it a little and put some dressing on, maybe with some antiseptic cream. It won’t take long. If you won’t care for yourself, I’ll do it for you.” Hannibal’s tone turns a little authoritarian at the end, and Will is a little taken aback.

He swallows and thinks it would be unwise to deny Hannibal, he is clearly set on tending to Will’s wound and he has a feeling it would upset him if he said no. So he lets him, even though it’s entirely unnecessary.

“I do care for myself.” Will mumbles as Hannibal pulls up a stool next to where Will is sat and leans in to dab an alcoholic wipe over the small cut.

He flinches a little at the sting as Hannibal replies, “Not enough, it’s a good thing you have me to step in when needed.”

Will’s eyes flicker to Hannibal’s for a second and then he quickly continues looking off to the side, in order to avoid eye contact at such close proximity.

“I do appreciate the concern. Jack just told me it makes me look tough. He was joking of course but he didn’t really say much else.”

“And that bothers you.” Hannibal says thoughtfully as his warm fingers continue to brush over Will’s face while he works.

“You were injured while doing something that he asked you to do, and he doesn’t even show concern.”

“It’s hardly something to be concerned over, it’s essentially just a scratch.”

“And yet you’re letting me tend to it as though it is much more.”

“I figured it would be best not to say no to you.”

This makes Hannibal smirk.

“You think I would scold you.”

Will swallows, “You basically told me off for not taking care of myself.”

“Somebody needs to.” Hannibal says playfully, “Besides, that wasn’t me telling you off. You’d know if I was.”

“Okay ‘dad’.” Will says sarcastically. His tone is lighthearted and playful too.

Hannibal huffs a gentle laugh, his eyes landing on Will’s as he does.

Will looks away.

Hannibal reaches into his bag for the cream and begins to gently smooth it onto Will’s skin, on and around the ‘damaged’ area.

“It doesn’t bother me that Jack isn’t very concerned, I don’t expect him to be. He’s not my dad. And I’m not a child that needs reassurance.” Will says simply.

“The desire for reassurance is not something that is reserved just for children. Adult men need it too, Will. There’s no shame in that.”

“Well I have you for that, right?”
Will’s voice is sarcastic again, a nudge at Hannibal’s insistence on being there for Will. But Hannibal can hear that there is sincerity in there too.

“Yes you do.” Hannibal says with complete seriousness.

“Just the dressing now.” He says as he places a small square of bandaging over the cut and puts some medical tape over it to keep it in place.

“All done.” He says softly and simply can’t help brushing his thumb ever so slightly over Will’s cheek, just by the small, now covered, wound.
He is filled with immense satisfaction to see Will cared for properly and know that he is the one who provided that care.

Hannibal knows Will notices the lingering touch, can tell by the way he blushes a little and smiles an awkward lop sided smile.
Hannibal stands, puts the stool back in its rightful place, and then takes his usual seat opposite Will.

“Are you sure your shoulder is okay?” He says, remembering that Will had said it was hurting before.

“It’s fine.” Will replies. But Hannibal’s knows he would say that even if he was in agony.

He moves on regardless.

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Chapter 2

Will makes sure he is free to see Hannibal the next morning, he wants to thank him for his kindness. He also wants to show him how much better the small cut on his face is now. He had taken the dressing off and was pleased to see that it had healed brilliantly over the course of 24hrs. Not completely healed, of course, but considerably better. Thanks to Hannibal.

His shoulder is still hurting a little though. She must have really shoved him hard. It left him with an annoying ache. He tries to ignore it and focus on his shower, breakfast, and playing with the dogs for a while before he leaves.

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When Will strolls around Hannibal's office an hour later, it's no surprise that Hannibal notices how he rolls his shoulder and scrunches his face up just a little as it gives him some bother.

"It's still hurting?" He observes gently.

"Just a little ache, she was strong." Will says with a smirk.

Hannibal smiles too and seems to think for a moment.

"Come here." He says flippantly. He is standing behind his desk chair, and gestures to the seat.

"What for?" Will asks, and curses himself for the slight nervousness to his voice.

"Your shoulder is aching, I will massage it for you. please, have a seat."

Will didn't really know how to react. He tries to see it as a normal thing, despite it feeling somewhat abnormal to sit and let your friend/psychiatrist give you a massage. He wants to say something sarcastic. But the truth is he hasn't had a massage in ages and it would be nice. And Hannibal is a doctor after all, he could probably find every spot that needs to be massaged. Every spot that would feel good and release all of the tension.

He lets out a big sigh, to give the appearance of reluctance, and then quietly stomps over to Hannibal. He stands facing him for a moment and then rolls his eyes slightly before turning around and dropping down into the seat, Hannibal standing behind him.

It seems silly, but Will didn't want to just do as he was told. It felt like he had to resist just a little. And act just a little annoyed at his shoulder for putting him in this slightly awkward position.
If he sat down quietly, it was like he wanted this. And for some reason he was embarrassed by that thought. So he sighed, and rolled his eyes, and walked with reluctance, in the hopes that it would look like he simply had no choice but to do this, because of his shoulder.

He can hear Hannibal's smirk before he speaks.
"Will, if you truly didn't want to do this, then it would not be happening. Your childish displays of feigned annoyance at the situation are unnecessary. Your shoulder hurts. I am going to massage it. It's simple and nothing to be embarrassed about. Just relax and enjoy it." Hannibal says far too casually.

Will can't think of anything to say, so he says nothing and just makes himself comfortable in the grand chair.

Next thing he knows, Hannibal's large and strong hands are on his shoulders, pressing into them gently yet firmly. Will can feel the heat from them seeping through his shirt. It's a warm day so he isn't wearing a jumper. But apparently the shirt is still too many layers for Hannibal to perform the massage properly, because he reaches around and begins to undo quite a few of Will's shirt buttons.
Will doesn't move or say anything but he wasn't exactly expecting the action, and his breath hitches slightly at the first touch of Hannibal's warm fingers brushing against his neck while he fiddles with the buttons.

When enough buttons are undone and Will's shirt is hanging rather loosely, Hannibal pulls it and rearranges it so it is almost like an 'off the shoulder' top. Then he puts his hands back onto Will's bare shoulders.
Will tries to ignore how much skin he has exposed. He focuses instead on how smooth Hannibal's hands are and how he can feel their heat even more now. He closes his eyes and breathes out heavily, contently. Hannibal smiles softly and begins to massage him properly, without his shirt in the way.

Turns out Hannibal is amazing with his hands. Will can't help but close his eyes and sigh with pleasure. His shoulder has always been a source of discomfort for him, and Hannibal seems to just knead the tension out. He can feel his muscles become more relaxed and pain-free. Hannibal starts right at the top of his neck, pressing circles into the soft flesh there with his thumbs while simultaneously pushing his palms in just a little lower. His hands travel down Will's neck and spread out at the top of his spine, sliding over his shoulders and collar bone area. Then Hannibal brings his hands forward, near to the front of Will's neck. He lightly traces his finger tips all over that area and it makes Will's skin break out in goosebumps. Hannibal of course notices this and smirks to himself. He gently brushes his fingers around the front of Will's neck, even glides them along his Adam's apple. And then he brings his hands back up and over Will's shoulders. He squeezes the flesh there more firmly, pulling any knots free and easing the tension. His thumbs press down circles near Will's shoulder blades and apparently it's an area that needs attention because Will let's a very small, satisfied moan slip from his lips.
If Hannibal hadn't been paying attention to every single reaction that Will makes, he might not of heard it. He swells with pride.

Hannibal casually glances at the clock and is shocked to see that he's been massaging Will for about 20 minutes. Will still has his eyes closed and his entire body is relaxed. Hannibal doesn't want to stop.

"Would you like me to continue for a while longer?" He asks gently and quietly.

Will very surprisingly says, “Yes please.”

It startles Hannibal for a moment, he was expecting him to jump up and shrug it off. But instead his voice is soft and sleepy. Hannibal smiles fondly.
“Does that feel nice?” Hannibal asks, his voice soft and gentle.

“Mmhhm” is apparently all Will can manage as Hannibal continues his magic.

He pauses briefly as he reaches around to undo another of Will’s buttons. Will doesn’t protest. And then Hannibal pulls his shirt down even more. It’s very close to being completely off now.
And now instead of kneading Will’s flesh, Hannibal simply traces his finger tips all over it. Gently and lightly, feather-like touches that make Will experience shivers and tingles and give him goosebumps. Sometimes Hannibal uses his nails lightly too, and he loves how Will shuffles slightly in his seat and lets little sounds of contentment slip from his lips.

“Feels so nice.” He murmurs quietly.

“I’m glad you’re enjoying it.” Hannibal says as he brings his hands up to play with Will’s hair. He lightly brushes his hands over it and ever so slightly pulls on the curls. It sends wonderful tingles rushing through Will and he gently pushes his head further into Hannibal’s hands, like a purring kitten asking for more pets.

Will slowly opens his eyes and glances at the clock, realising it’s been 35 minutes now. That’s probably enough.

“I feel much better now, thank you. You can stop.” He says as casually as he can.

“Of course. I’m glad you feel better.” Hannibal replies and takes his hands away.

Will stands and buttons up his shirt, and suddenly feels a little embarrassed by how many buttons are undone. He’d been so caught up in Hannibal’s touches that he hadn’t even noticed he was practically shirtless. He felt a blush creep up his neck.

Hannibal seemed as calm as ever, though.
Explaining that he should probably start getting ready for his next patient now, but he was very pleased that he had been able to help Will. And he would be willing to do it again if he ever needed him to.
Will muttered a thank you and tried to be just as casual as Hannibal.

Will wasn’t expecting a wonderful and relaxing massage when he came to Hannibal’s office, and yet somehow it had happened. His entire body felt so much calmer and soothed, and Will was more grateful than ever for Hannibal’s apparent desire to care for him and make him feel better, in any way he could.

And then he’s at the door and Hannibal is telling him that he very much looks forward to seeing him again tomorrow.

Will hesitates a little before he turns away, and he realises that it actually feels nice, Hannibal's concern and affection.

Will thanks him again and smiles before he leaves, and finds that he too is looking forward to seeing Hannibal again tomorrow.

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It wasn't the next day that Will saw Hannibal. A big case had come up over the night and he'd reluctantly had to call and cancel. It was four days later the next time Will saw him. And he carried with him mixed emotions.

He had just caught an infamous serious killer. And with that came cause to celebrate. To be proud of himself. Jack was proud, in his own way.
And yet, it was difficult to let go of the mental state that Will had placed himself in, in order to catch said killer.

Will was both happy and horrified.
His killer still roamed free in his dreams, wandering around the halls of his mind and pressing buttons that ought not to be pressed. He made Will see things. Things that had helped him to catch the gruesome man and things that he didn't want to see anymore.

Hannibal could immediately see Will's internal fight.

"I must congratulate you on your recent arrest," he said as they both sat down. "Excellent work, Will. Jack must be pleased with you."

"Yeah, I think he is."

"I confess to feeling proud, also. You are a fine agent. I imagine you are pleased with yourself too."

Will ridiculously felt glad at the thought of Hannibal being proud. He was a very successful and intelligent older man. His approval admittedly felt nice.

"I am. I just wish I had a better way of catching them. A way that wasn't so personal."

Hannibal thought for a moment. "Is he still with you?"

"Kind of. My dreams are strange again. Not my own."

"Will, your mind is an incredible thing. If you are still haunted with pictures of his wrongdoings, it is simply another display of the extraordinary capacity you have for empathy and imagination."

Will made a 'i suppose' gesture with his features, before sighing and saying, "I just wish I could turn it off sometimes."

"Perhaps you just need more support and care."

“I don’t exactly have a line of people I can go to for those things.”

“You have me.” Hannibal says simply.

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The next time Will saw Hannibal, it was because of a case that Jack had asked them both to consult on.
They found themselves at a boat yard, not far from Baltimore, and when Jack had finished wracking Will’s brain for the time being, Hannibal gave him a sympathetic smile and suggested they go for a short walk around the yard. Will was happy to get away from the intensity of a crime scene, and thought it would be nice to stroll around a boat yard and take in the familiar sights that filled his childhood.
Just like old times. Jack just shrugged and got back to work, not really caring what Will did now that he had done his ‘useful’ part. Hannibal had to suppress the urge to comment.

They strode together in silence for a while, listening to the clicking of the sails on the boats as the wind pulled them back and forth, and the accompanying sound of the many birds perched on the surrounding trees.
It was nice here, peaceful, and Will found himself completely at ease as he felt the sun on his back and the breeze make his curls sway. There was a blue sky above and Hannibal seemed very content as he briefly glanced up and watched the birds fly over head.

“I miss it sometimes.” Will said rather out of the blue. He gave no indication as to what he was talking about, and simply looked ahead as he said it. But after a moments thought Hannibal knew what he meant.

“You miss simpler times on boat yards with dad.” He replied, as though it was perfectly simple to understand.

Will briefly thought that it sounded a little childish, made it seem like he wished he was still a little boy following his father. But he didn’t say anything.

“It’s strange being back on a boat yard. Makes me think of him.” Will paused and then smiled gently as he said, “I feel like any moment he’s gonna come round a corner with a coffee in one hand and in the other a hot chocolate for me. Cigarette balancing between his lips, clothes with so many rips in I’m surprised he wasn’t always freezing. Covered in dirt and grime. And just... my dad.”

Will glanced at Hannibal out of the corner of his eye. “Nothing like you” he says, and it’s hard to figure out what emotion his voice holds as he says it.

Hannibal gives him a curious look but says nothing.

Will looks down and smiles awkwardly, then continues sharing a few memories as they both walk together.

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Hannibal had invited Will back to his home for something to eat - seeing as his home was closer to where they had been working- explaining that Will could eat with him and then go home to the dogs.

And later in the evening when they had finished, they ended up sat by the fire with two glasses of whiskey between them.

After a short comfortable silence, Hannibal spoke.

“I can’t help but think of what you said earlier, it was an interesting thing to say.” Hannibal said as he remembered the words.

“What’s that?” Will asked, either genuinely not remembering or not wanting to look further into it and analyse its meaning.

“Nothing like me. You said your father was nothing like me. I find it interesting that you would compare us.”

Will shrugged slightly, and swallowed as he tried to think of a reason for saying what he had said.

“You said, ‘nothing like you’ as though the notion of us not sharing similarities was a little confusing or shocking to you - as though you expected there to be similarities but there isn’t.”

Will opened and then closed his mouth.

“Your father and I have no physical similarities, nor do we share any personality traits or characteristics, which makes me believe that it is not either of us that is the source of the connection that you have made. It is yourself. You are the connection between myself and your father. Your feelings. The feelings and emotions that you have for him perhaps mirror some of the feelings and emotions that you have for me.”

“I don’t think so, it was just a casual observation, you don’t need to over think it.” Will said as he shuffled a little in his seat.

“I am a therapist, this means people come to me for guidance and support - just as some people might go to a paternal figure for those things. It is not a huge leap.” Hannibal continued.

Will said nothing.

“I like to cook for you, support you, and sometimes you come to me for guidance. It is no surprise that you think my actions towards you have a potentially paternal aspect.” Hannibal spoke casually, and not at all uncomfortably. As though he was perfectly happy with such an idea.

“And, of course, I am notably older than you.” He finished with a smirk.

Will wasn’t sure what to say. So he avoided it.
“It’s getting a little late,” he said after a minutes silence, “I should probably get going home to the dogs.”
“Thank you though, this was nice.” He said politely and just a little awkwardly.

“Of course, any time Will. I enjoyed our evening together.”

He had expected that Will would become skittish if he brought it up, it wasn’t a surprise that he was suddenly excusing himself.

Hannibal rose to get Will’s coat for him, helping him into it as Will smiled sheepishly and avoided eye contact.

“Drive safely.” He said as he followed Will to the door,
“And give the dogs a pet from me.” He said with a chuckle and a slightly sarcastic smile.

Will laughed lightly, “I will. Goodnight, Hannibal.”

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will had noticed that it had become a common and regular occurrence to see Hannibal at the fbi academy. Apparently Jack was finding his insight very useful, and so Hannibal was often asked to accompany them on cases and go back to the office to discuss them.

It meant that Hannibal and Will spent a lot more time together, which -if anything- was just useful when it came to their therapy sessions, Will didn't need to fill Hannibal in on the gruesome cases that had him riled up, Hannibal was there.

It also meant that Hannibal was there to observe Will a lot, and he took full advantage of that. Will could have swore he wasn't even trying to be subtle, keeping an eye on him and watching his behaviour at all times- all stored on a shelf to bring up in their little talks, Will supposed. He should've probably felt a little violated, if it was any other psychiatrist watching how he works everyday, he would. But he found that he didn't mind Hannibal's presence.
He is a calming man and, of course, is very intelligent- his interesting theories had proven to be very useful a lot of the time.

However it also meant that he could see the tired and clumsy side of Will.

It was early in the morning -too early- when Hannibal had rolled up to a scene in his Bentley, looking far too composed and put together for such an hour. He had offered his usual polite greetings before joining Jack and Will where they stood - circled around a gruesome scene out in an open field. They conversed about it like they were at a garden party or something, and Will had to suppress the urge to cringe uncomfortably at how hardened they had become to such things. They should all be holding their stomachs, and instead they were sipping coffee out of thermos flasks and 'chatting' about this killers design.

Will soon learnt that it wasn't very smart to drink said coffee whilst his mind was still very much distracted, still somewhere else. Like a radio slightly out of tune - clinging to a different channel, not quite displaying the one he was trying to listen to.

He wasn't concentrating, and brought the flask to his mouth in a bit of a trance - just out of habit and using mostly muscle memory. Of course he missed his mouth, spilling his - rather hot- flask of coffee right down his light blue shirt.

Will gasped and flinched, jumping back slightly as though he could move away from the clothing that was wrapped securely around his body. He immediately felt his cheeks go red - and his chest for that matter. The hot coffee burned as it seeped through the shirt and onto his skin as the other men turned to look at him in surprise.

Jack just looked annoyed that Will had interrupted them, and Hannibal looked concerned. He quickly sprung into action, thinking on his feet.

“Here,” He said, standing closer to Will and pulling him off to the side as he began to remove his fleece jumper.

“Take that off, we’ll have to improvise.” Hannibal continued, gesturing to Will’s coffee stained shirt.
Will was, of course, a little shocked and reluctant. He didn’t want to stand shirtless in the middle of this field, with Jack right there, but Hannibal was deliberately “guarding” him, putting his body in front of Will to give him some privacy, and his larger frame hid him well.

“You can wear my jumper for now, it’s not ideal but we have few options. I still have my shirt, and you have a dry piece of clothing over you, even if it is just a jumper.” He explained smoothly, not at all troubled by the route this was taking.

Will just blinked at him.

“Quickly now, take it off before it burns your skin.” He said a little more impatiently.

Will blushed furiously, god this was embarrassing, as he gave in and slipped his shirt over his head - after all, what else could he do? He’d look a fool if he walked around with a shirt that was covered in a huge coffee stain. And it was a warm day, he had no jacket to cover it.

He made the huge mistake of making eye contact with Hannibal as he stood for a split second with his chest bare, and although Hannibal remained calm and professional, Will quickly looked away, grabbing the jumper out of his hand as quickly as he could.
He could see from his peripheral that Jack was still talking to someone else about the body in the field- Will spilling his drink over himself and having to change into his colleagues clothing was the least of his concerns.

Will pulled the jumper over his head, immediately feeling the warmth of Hannibal’s body still lingering on it.

It smelt of him, too.

It only made Will blush more.

And, of course, it was too big for him. Almost burying Will - making him appear smaller and child-like as the sleeves reached his finger tips. It was wonderfully comfortable though, the expensive material impossibly soft and comforting.

Will rolled the sleeves up a little, and tucked it in to his trousers, trying to make it sit a little better on his smaller frame.

He sighed and rubbed a hand over his face,
“It’ll have to do, thank you.” He added with some clear annoyance at his own actions.

Hannibal looked a little concerned for a second, Will was clearly very tired and it was affecting his work. He kept his concern to himself though, going back to his cool and collected self as they walked back over to the scene - Hannibal now in just his plain white shirt, and Will wearing his light brown jumper as casually as he could.

==========

After the performance at the field, they had all gone back to the academy- Hannibal and Will being left alone in the office while Jack went off to get some confirmation of something from Beverly.

They sat silently in the office, Will still feeling the embarrassment of earlier events, sat there in Hannibal's jumper.

Will's stomach began to growl.

God he hadn't even eaten yet.

He hoped Hannibal wouldn't notice, but every time the sound of a stomach growling echoed through the quiet room, Will cringed and cursed himself for not having breakfast.

Of course it just would not relent. And so Will got up and tried to make himself busy with paper work to try and ignore it.
And just when Will thought the sound of rustling papers would be enough to hide his hunger,

"Have you eaten?" Hannibal asked casually, but Will didn't miss the mild hint of worry.

"Erm, no not yet" Will replied, half ignoring Hannibal. Trying to just casually get on with his work.

Hannibal checked his watch, "It's 3pm and you haven't eaten all day."

"I'll have something soon." Will countered a little impatiently, still faffing around.

Hannibal was silent for a second, then his tone turned rather stern, "I must insist you have something now, Will."

Will stopped his movements and looked up, his brow furrowing in confusion.

Hannibal looked serious.

"Please, let's go to the cafeteria."

Will blinked at him. He looked so calm and casual, like he wasn't ordering Will to go and eat something.

Will felt childish, and he clenched his jaw while looking down at the desk.

"You can eat something quickly, and then you may continue with what you are doing. But you will not be able to do it properly if you are hungry."

It was hard to argue with that logic, though Will didn't appreciate being told what to do. He was about to protest, but his stomach let out a perfectly timed growl. He sighed and rolled his eyes a little.

“Fine.”

Once there, Will attempted to just get a sandwich. But Hannibal gave him a ‘look’, hard to describe, but Will knew it meant “that’s not enough and you know it.” So he sighed and went over to the hot food section. He eyed the pasta, it didn’t look great, and while Hannibal himself would usually never eat such a thing, Will needed something filling, so he gave him an encouraging look.

It made Will roll his eyes. But he got it nonetheless.

As they sat down to eat, Will couldn’t help but feel self conscious. Hannibal was watching him. Seemingly very satisfied every time Will placed another fork-full of food into his mouth.

“Do you not want to get something for yourself?” Will asked, feeling a little awkward about the fact that he was eating while Hannibal just sat there.

“I ate before I arrived at the scene, but thank you for the concern.” He replied as politely as ever.

And he seemed content, so Will didn’t push him anymore.

Will was about half way through his food when he started to feel full and like he couldn’t eat anymore. He opted for pushing the remaining pieces of pasta around the plate, apparently hoping that that was just as good as actually eating it.

Hannibal watched him for a moment and then gave him a knowing look, one that made a Will shuffle in his seat.

“Try to eat some more.” Hannibal said nonchalantly.

And for some reason it made Will blush. He was essentially being told to ‘finish his meal’, and it made him feel infantile. Not helped by Hannibal’s authoritative presence and words.

He looked Hannibal in the eye as he shovelled the last bit down, a sarcastic look on his face. He had hoped it would make Hannibal see that he absolutely did not need his encouragement to finish a meal and could do it perfectly fine by himself thank you very much-

But it just made Hannibal smile warmly.

==========

When they returned to the office, Jack was there.
He seemed frustrated, which Will didn’t pay much attention to seeing as that was pretty much

his natural state, but then Jack turned to him, and his face looked accusatory.

“Where have you been?” He huffed impatiently.

“I went to get something to eat, I-“

“Save it, you’re needed here Will, eat on your own time. You have a lunch break, no?”

Will was thrown by the harsh tone, clearly Beverly hadn’t had the news he was looking for and it had put him in a foul mood, but Will tried to remain polite as he replied.

“Well I was busy then so I couldn’t-“

“Couldn’t manage your time?” Jack interrupted.

For a second Will couldn’t believe that Jack was genuinely annoyed that he would take a second to go and eat. Of course he knew really Jack was just displacing anger, and the stress of the case was getting to him. Not to mention he often ignored Will’s health in order to take advantage of his abilities - so it wasn’t the most surprising thing in the world that he would react like this.

Still, it hurt.

Without warning, all of Will’s exhaustion, anger, stress, and annoyance just bubbled to the surface.

“I went to get something to eat, you can’t do without me for half an hour?” He asked sarcastically, anger lacing his voice.

“Then you’re more incompetent than I realised.” Will added. muttered under his breath but loud enough to be heard.

“Will..” Hannibal tried.

But Will couldn’t stop himself now, “No I’m sick of this! He orders me around constantly and when I have just a two minute break I’m scolded for it? I get that things are stressful here right now, it’s a big case, but if he can’t handle me being gone for a short break-“

“You are right,” Hannibal interrupted before Will went too far, “Jack should be respectful of you needing a break to eat,” Hannibal looked in Jack’s direction as he said this, not accusingly but just stating a truth, “but getting angry and shouting won’t solve anything.”

Hannibal stepped closer to him and put a hand on Will’s shoulder, forcing eye contact, “You’re stressed, tired, and probably still hungry. Don’t get worked up, it isn’t worth your energy.” His voice was quieter that time, meant only for Will.

He was trying to soothe him, Will realised.
And Will wanted to be frustrated, tell him he’s not a child that needs to be placated.
But Hannibal’s voice was actually calming him down, his sincere look and warm hand on his shoulder indeed soothing him.

Will let out a sigh and his expression softened.
He certainly wasn't going to apologise to Jack, but he felt bad for losing his temper in front of Hannibal.

He felt his neck flush red with embarrassment.

"Come, I will drive you home." Hannibal said calmly as he put an arm around Will's back and began to lead him. Jack looked like he was going to protest, Will was needed there - even if it was nearing the end of the day - but Hannibal shot him a look and he didn't say anything.

Will simply let Hannibal lead him to his car with a hand on the small of his back, too tired to protest or tell him that he can look after himself, can drive himself home.

When they were both seated in the car, Will seemed to come back to himself.

He cringed a little before he spoke, "I'm sorry I made a scene, god that's embarrassing."

He sighed and rubbed his hands over his face.

He found himself worried that Hannibal would be disappointed or ashamed of his behaviour. It's was an odd thing to think, and Will wasn't sure what it meant.

"Your reaction is perfectly warranted, Jack pushes you too hard, Will. You must try to take time for yourself. It's okay, I'm here to make sure you do."

Hannibal looked at him seriously, and as the car heating warmed them and the classical music played softly, Hannibal spoke sincerely,

"I'm here to make sure you get what's best for you. You must come to me, if you need me. I can handle Jack." he added that last bit with a smirk. Will offered a small smile too as Hannibal began to drive, thinking he sounded like a parent saying they will handle the overly strict teacher.

==========

For a moment neither of them moved when they arrived at Will's home, Hannibal unsure of whether or not he should walk Will inside or if he would find that too patronising.

But eventually Will broke the silence, "You can come in for coffee before you drive back if you like. I can't believe you drove all this way just to drive back again. I appreciate it, I was way too tired to drive, but I'm shocked you're willing. Coffee is the least I can do."

"It's my pleasure," Hannibal replied happily, "I wouldn't want you driving when you are tired, it's not safe. But yes, a coffee would be beneficial before I drive back, thank you." He said gratefully as he undid his seatbelt.

The dogs greeted Hannibal excitedly, before Will let them out to play and go to the toilet - he filled their bowls with food and water so they were ready when they came in.

But for a while he shut them outside, listening to their playful barks as they ran around.

Will smiled a little awkwardly as Hannibal stood so elegantly in his quaint and casual home. It was so different to Hannibal's life style. But he seemed comfortable as he gestured to one of the arm chairs by the fire, "may I?"

"Yes of course, sorry, please have a seat. I'll light the fire."

Will lit the fire as quickly as he could before taking a seat next to Hannibal.
He sighed contently as Hannibal sipped on his coffee and Will, in contrast, sipped his whiskey.

Hannibal looked content too, sat back and so at ease, the light from the fire casting a warm glow that danced across his face.

They didn't say a lot, just sat in a peaceful silence and let the stress of the day leave them.

But eventually Hannibal reluctantly said that he should start to drive back, it was starting to get dark.

He rose and Will led him to the door.
As Hannibal strolled down the porch steps and waved goodbye, Will seemed to suddenly become aware that he was still wearing his jumper.

"Wait! Your jumper!"

Hannibal turned back at the sound, chuckling at Will's apparent urgency.

He began to walk back towards him and without thinking, Will just pulled the clothing over his head and held it out. Shoving it to Hannibal, a little red because of the completely unnecessary panicked rushing to make sure Hannibal didn't leave without it.

Will blushed when he realised what he had done. Hannibal just glanced at the jumper being pushed out towards him and failed to conceal an amused smirk.

"Oh erm, I- wait sorry I forgot-" Will started, but then he realised how stupid it sounded to say he forgot that if he took the only item of clothing on his torso off, he would be shirtless.

He went a little red as he turned around and made his way to his draws to grab a shirt, still holding Hannibal's jumper, and thus once again taking it away from him.

Hannibal just smirked, his expression soft. He stood in the doorway watching Will.

"It's okay," He said with a small laugh, "Don't be embarrassed."

Will put Hannibal's jumper on the bed while he grabbed one of his own shirts, and Hannibal took the opportunity to come back inside and stand next to the bed so he could reach it.

He paused when he noticed that Will was rushing so much to get the shirt over his head that it got stuck.

“God..” Will huffed in embarrassment and desperation to stop making a fool of himself. His arms were trapped in the sleeves.

Hannibal laughed softly again.

“Let me help you.” He said gently.

And before Will could protest, Hannibal’s hands were on him. Will flinched when he felt the first brush of warm fingers against his bare torso as he was helped to pull the t-shirt over his head.

He felt Hannibal’s thumb brush against his nipple as he pulled the shirt down.

Will was extremely embarrassed.

And Hannibal thought it was quite amusing.

“God I’m sorry, I’ve been a mess today.” Will said weakly.

“Don’t apologise to me, Will. it’s been a pleasure helping you today.”

Will suddenly had an enormous urge to bury his face in Hannibal’s neck and cry, it had just been one of those days and Hannibal had been so kind and warm to him. And he looked so comforting and soft stood before him.

Will would do anything to just sink into his arms.

The thought came to him unbidden, and he felt desperately confused with himself.

He had the ridiculous thought that he should have kept the jumper with him, slept in it and been comforted by its soft and most likely stupidly expensive material. The smell would have been wrapped around him. Like Hannibal was still there.

Will wanted him still there.

Maybe it was because he was feeling vulnerable and exhausted and just like a bit of a mess after the stressful day, but Hannibal felt like his paddle right now. He didn’t want him to leave.

Hannibal ran a hand up his arm, a comforting touch, “Make sure you eat something, drink water, and get to bed nice and early - you need rest.”

Will nodded sheepishly, “I will, thanks again”.

“No thanks necessary.” Hannibal said with a warm smile.

He let his hand linger on Will’s arm before he turned to leave.

“Goodnight Will, I will see you soon.”

Will forced himself not to ask Hannibal to stay for longer, instead saying a warm ‘goodbye’.

When Hannibal was gone, Will poured a large whiskey and sat by the fire with his dogs. He felt emotionally drained, and confused by his desire to seek comfort in Hannibal. He supposed it wasn't the strangest thing. Hannibal was his friend and unofficial psychiatrist, he provided him with a certain amount of safety and support because of that.

He convinced himself that his feelings were normal and he was over thinking it. And then he took himself off for a shower before bed, taking Hannibal's advice and getting an early night.

He dreamt of strong and warm arms holding him close.

Chapter End Notes

Honestly I'm unsure of where to go next with this - I don't want to actually go down the route of Will starting to call Hannibal "daddy" or something, I feel like there are plenty of amazing daddy kink fics in this fandom and that's not really what I intended this to be. I want it to be a subtle exploration of potential 'daddy issues' but not in a very sexual or kinky way. So far I've enjoyed writing the little scenarios that this could have come out, but I'm unsure if there are any more I can add without drifting into proper daddy kink waters. If you have any ideas / things you'd like to explore I'll have a think. Perhaps one last therapy session about it? I'm not sure. So this might be on hold for a while

Chapter 4

It was 4pm on a Friday when Will found himself stuck at a crime scene. He and Jack had been there for a couple of hours in the freezing cold. And when Will couldn't have imagined it getting worse, the sky had turned black and a heavy rain had begun to pour.

There was little shelter from it and before Will knew it he was absolutely soaked.
His wet clothes clung to his freezing skin and his veins felt icy.

He was miserable.

And he wanted nothing more than to go home and curl up by the fire with his dogs.
But when Jack finally told him he was free to go he of course couldn't do that.
He had an appointment with Hannibal and it was something that he didn't want to miss.
They'd agreed to meet at Hannibal's home, something a little less formal for an end of the week meeting.

No matter how crap Will's day had been, how cold and tired he was, he needed to go. He wanted to.

If he'd have had time he would have gone home first and changed into some dry clothes, maybe had a hot shower to warm himself up. But he'd been at the scene longer than expected and didn't want to be late.

So he reluctantly got in his car and felt the wetness of his clothes seep into his car seats.
He felt the tiredness down to his bones.
He looked at his phone.
No. He would not cancel.

When he arrived at Hannibal's door step, he was aware of how he looked. So when Hannibal opened the door and his face immediately turned from a warm and pleased smile to a look of concern, it was no surprise.

Will's hair was drenched, dripping and sending little droplets of cold water down his cheeks. His lips looked a little blue, his teeth were chattering, and his skin was pale.

Hannibal reached for him, "My goodness, Will. You look absolutely frozen. Please, come inside quickly." He said as he led Will in.

The warmth of Hannibal's home hit him like a wave and Will immediately let out a relieved sigh.

The low lit lights scattered around, casting an orange glow, made it not just feel warm but also look warm. It felt like coming home, and the thought made Will's chest ache a little.

He was so comfortable so immediately he felt like collapsing at Hannibal's feet and just cuddling up to his legs, the unnecessarily fluffy rug did look like it would be nice to sit on. It was an odd thought. But an honest one. He clearly needed to sleep.

Hannibal's home was so immaculate and perfect and welcoming that Will felt guilty as he took a few steps and his shoes squelched with how wet they were. He grimaced and apologised.

"I'm more concerned about you than my floor. Take your shoes off and tell me where you've been to get in this state." Hannibal said gently, holding his arm out so Will could hold onto it for balance as he slipped his shoes off and looked on awkwardly as Hannibal propped them on top of a radiator to dry.

"Just a crime scene, we were outside and it started raining pretty heavily. I'm okay. Just cold."

Hannibal gave him an unusual look and then he quickly went to fetch something from another room. He came back with a huge blanket, immediately wrapping it around Will's body and then pulling him close to his chest. His arms followed in the blanket's footsteps and wrapped around Will.

"Come here," Hannibal said as he began to rub his hands up and down Will's arms to create friction and heat, "We must get you warm."

For a second Will was shocked and felt like he should probably feel a little awkward about being wrapped up and coddled. But the truth was he immediately felt the heat radiating from Hannibal's chest, and he couldn't resist pressing his cheek against it and allowing Hannibal to hold him for a moment.

He suddenly felt the tiredness like a tonne of bricks falling down on him. He could have probably fallen asleep right there, stood up in Hannibal's arms.

But Hannibal moved away, said he would be back in a moment.

Will felt the ridiculous and infantile urge to whine and pull him back, tell him not to go.
It almost worried him - how much he was ready to seek comfort in that moment.

It had been a long day.

Hannibal returned shortly, carrying clean and dry clothes.
Will nearly sighed with relief. The thought of peeling off the horrible wet material was nagging him constantly.
He also blushed a little at the thought that he would be wearing Hannibal's clothes *again* but he was too cold and wet to care.

And then came a tightening in his chest as Hannibal approached him with a warm smile, comfortable clothes for Will in his arms, and said with a soft voice, "Lets get you dry, hm?"

It made him feel cared for and looked after. Like he was important and Hannibal wanted to make sure he was healthy and okay. Will smiled a genuine smile and told Hannibal that he was very grateful.

Hannibal handed Will some comfortable looking trousers and a maroon knitted jumper. He also handed him some socks and underwear - they were the only items that looked new. Which meant Hannibal must wear the other clothes.
Will gratefully accepted them, quickly going into a bathroom to dry off and change.
They were a little big for him, looked a little baggy, loose around his waist and too long for Will's slightly shorter legs. But it didn't matter.

When Will came back out, wearing the wonderfully soft clothes (that had a lingering smell of Hannibal attached to them), Hannibal told him to sit down on the sofa and then he sat next to him.

Quite close.

Their legs touched and Will felt the warmth coming from Hannibal's thigh pressing into his own.

He wanted to rub his face against it.

But he quickly pushed that thought away.

Hannibal wrapped a different blanket around Will's shoulders, the other one obviously now damp after making contact with Will's wet clothes.

Then he seemed to take a towel from thin air and began to dry Will's hair with it.

Will couldn't help but feel embarrassed at that.

He would have done it himself but it would have required him to bring his hands and arms out from the cocoon that he was wrapped up in, and it was so toasty and warm that he couldn't bring himself to do it.

Will wondered if Hannibal had done it on purpose, wrapped him up in a blanket so he would have to let Hannibal fuss over him. It made him smile.

After Will's hair was dry Hannibal went off to make Will a hot drink.
He wasn't long, but after handing it to Will he went off again to quickly warm up a bowl of the soup he had made earlier that day.

When Hannibal placed the steaming bowl of delicious smelling food on the coffee table in front of Will, his mouth started to water.

For a second he just looked at it.
He didn't want to bring his hands out from his cocoon.

Hannibal seemed to notice and know exactly what Will was thinking.

“I could feed you, if you like?” He said far too casually.

Will turned a little pink and quickly blurted out that it was fine, pulling his hands free from the blanket to emphasise his point.

Hannibal just smiled.

Will couldn’t help but take big mouthfuls of the soup. It was instantly soothing him, so delicious and warm.
He moaned around the spoon, closed his eyes and savoured the taste.
“This is so good, thank you.” He mumbled appreciatively.

“My pleasure.” Hannibal replied as he watched him eat.

When done, Hannibal took the dish from him. And while he cleared it away in the kitchen Will took the opportunity to wrap himself back up in his cocoon and lie back slightly against the sofa. He hoped Hannibal wouldn’t mind him making himself so relaxed. But the sofa was so comfortable and he felt so soothed and content.

When Hannibal returned and sat down next to Will again, he leaned over and placed a hand on Will’s forehead. The action was surprisingly natural and Will found himself leaning into it.

Quite happy to lie back all snuggled up on Hannibal’s sofa while he pressed his palm to his forehead, moving his curls out of the way to do so.
It felt nice when Hannibal brushed a hand through his hair. Will’s eyes flickered shut for a second.

Hannibal hummed then got out a thermometer. “Open.” He said gently, tapping Will’s bottom lip with the end of it.

Will blushed slightly but opened his mouth.

Hannibal frowned a little when he looked at the result.

“I think you might be coming down with something, though that’s not surprising considering the weather you were in.”

Wills eyelids felt heavy but he listened all the same.
“I’ll be fine, I should get back to my dogs.” he said unconvincingly, interrupted by his own yawning.

“I would feel much better if you would stay here and rest for a while, let me keep an eye on you. I am a doctor after all. Just a couple hours to nap and we’ll see how you are when you wake up. If you’ll give me your neighbours number, I will call them and politely ask if they would mind tending to your dogs. They have done so before, yes? So they know them and their routine.”

It was hard to argue with Hannibal. Especially when Will didn't want to. He felt so content and he was afraid if he left he'd go back to feeling cold and miserable.
He just wanted to sleep, right there.

He handed his phone to Hannibal, told him his neighbours name so he could find him in his contacts, and before he could listen to check if the neighbour was okay with it, he was out like a light.

Will woke to the sound of birds chirping.

He felt the light of day seeping in through the windows, illuminating the room.
And he noticed a cushion had been tucked behind his head.
He stretched and yawned, briefly thought he could hear the sound of someone in the kitchen.
He smelt coffee and eggs.

And that's when it hit him.

It was morning. Hannibal was making breakfast.

He had slept the whole night.

He fell asleep on Hannibal Lecters couch, after showing up drenched and taking up his time while he tended to him, and then he slept through til morning, spent the night.

And to top it off he couldn't remember the last time he slept so well.

Will was planning his apology speech when Hannibal entered the room, bright and happy.

"Here you are." He said warmly, handing Will a mug of coffee that smelt amazing.

"I'm so pleased you slept so well, Will. I do hope you don't mind me removing your watch, I simply wanted you to be as comfortable as possible."

That's when Will noticed his watch sitting on the coffee table beside him.

"I'm- you don't mind? I fell asleep, I've been here all night. Don't you have patients?"

"It's Saturday." Hannibal said with a smile.
"And no of course I do not mind. It is of absolutely no bother to me to help you when you need me. Quite the opposite, it is my pleasure."

Will was a little shocked.
"Well I'm sorry all the same, it was rather rude of me to just crash here."

"Nonsense, you had a high temperature and seemed a little unwell, you could hardly help falling asleep. Besides, I specifically requested it if I remember correctly." He said, smiling

again.

“Please don’t worry, Will. I’m happy you’re here, it means I can make sure you’re okay. It looks like the sleep did you good. Your temperature is down slightly, but you will most likely feel under the weather for a few days. I’ll get you some breakfast.”

Will wanted to protest, wanted to say it really was not necessary and that Hannibal had already done enough. But Hannibal didn’t seem bothered by it. If anything he seemed eager and happy. So Will said nothing. Just enjoyed the coffee and gratefully accepted the scrambled eggs that Hannibal provided.

After they had both eaten, Will said that he really must get home to his dogs. Though Hannibal put his worries at ease a little when he informed Will that he had contacted the neighbour again shortly after Will had fallen asleep and asked if they could also pop round to the dogs in the morning, offering his most sincere thanks and appreciations. They seemed very happy to do it.

Will smiled gratefully.

“Thank you so much, for everything. I know we didn’t really get to talk but I think I really needed that last night. You know just being here and not having to worry. It helped a lot, thank you.” He said sincerely.

Hannibal smiled fondly at Will and then helped him gather up his now dry clothes to change back into before he left.

It might have been worth getting caught in the rain.

Chapter 5

After weeks of traumatic crime scenes, abandoning his self care in favour of supporting Jack, and little rest, Will decides its time for a day off work.

Jack isn't exceptionally pleased but he seems to understand that Will needs a break. The job is literally making him feel ill. He's exhausted, has a constant headache, feels weak and drowsy, and just wants to sleep. And so he calls in sick and says he'll be off for a few days. He needs it and he knows that. Hannibal has often told him that he should take more time for himself. Thinking off Hannibal makes him feel lonely - for reasons he isn't quite sure - so he decides to clean the house to take his mind off of any distracting thoughts.

When finished he curls up with his dogs and enjoys not having to do anything but lounge around. He's hungry but can't be bothered to make some food. He wants to but his legs won't move, curtesy of two furry friends lying across them.

He's feeling sorry for himself and enjoying his dogs' company when the door goes.

He can't think of who it would be. Surely Jack wouldn't come knocking? He knows Will needs this time off. Will closed the curtains earlier so he can't see out the window.
He thinks about just ignoring it, but as the thought crosses his mind he hears another knock. Whoever it is really wants to see him.

Will huffs as he clambers up and to the door.

It's Hannibal.

For a second Will isn't sure what to think. He's stood in his boxers and a t shirt (too cosy to get dressed today) and Hannibal is at his door. Wearing another of his glorious three piece suits and carrying something that smells delicious.

"Hannibal," he stutters with a bit of a blush, "I wasn't expecting to see you today. Is everything okay?"

"I might ask you the same question." Hannibal says with a soft smile. "I was with Jack this morning. I asked after you and he said you were off sick. I thought I should bring you something nice to eat. It's important to eat well when you are sick Will."

Will doesn't say anything for a moment and Hannibal must take it the wrong way.

"I apologise for the intrusion, if you would like me to leave-"

"No no." Will cuts him off. "Not at all. Sorry, come in. I'm just surprised to see you is all."

Hannibal smiles as Will moves to the side to let him in and after a pause Will adds, "You drove all this way just to feed me?"

Will winces when he realises it might sound ungrateful. But Hannibal just seems slightly amused.

“The best cure for illness is good food. And I care about you being well. So here I am.”

Hannibal’s voice is a little softer and Will can’t help the emotion in his voice as he says thank you. It’s simply nice to be cared about.

Hannibal holds his eye contact for a moment, a fond expression written on his face, and Will has to look away.

“It’s very kind of you.” Will says as he walks over to his drawers, suddenly remembering that he is still in his boxers.

He grabs some pyjama bottoms and pulls them on quickly. Hannibal doesn’t avert his eyes and Will tries to ignore the heat rising up his neck.

“It’s no trouble.” Hannibal says as he watches Will finish getting ready.

The contrast in their clothing is comical but Hannibal doesn’t say anything.

Will gestures for the food, “Shall I go heat that up?”

“I’d rather you sit down and allow me to do it for you. You need rest and care.”

“You don’t have patients today?”

“I had to cancel a few.”

Will can only assume he cancelled them to come and tend to him. It makes him feel guilty.. but more than anything he feels warmth.

He wants to tell Hannibal he is grateful but the words get stuck in his throat. He’s afraid he’ll start thinking about the implications of Hannibal caring that much about him.

“It smells delicious.” He says instead as he sits down on the sofa.

Hannibal smiles and goes to find his way around the kitchen.

Will is suddenly glad he cleaned up, at least.

“You should sleep while I prepare this. Just a little nap so you are rested.”

“I don’t think I can sleep, my head hurts so much.”

Hannibal’s brow furrows with concern. He comes to sit by Will and presses the back of his hand to Will’s forehead. Will is embarrassed by how nice it feels, so touch-starved even the slightest intimacy gives him relief.

“You are very warm. Rest is important, Will. Lie back and I will fetch my book from the car. Reading to you might help you drift off.”

Will wants to say he is not a child and does not need someone to read to him. But Hannibal is already up and out the door, quickly retrieving it and coming back.

“Lie back.” He repeats, and it sounds a little sterner this time.
It’s clear Will doesn’t have a choice in this. Hannibal is determined.

Will lies back semi reluctantly and feels a furious blush when Hannibal places a blanket over him and attempts to tuck him in.

It’s a little embarrassing, feels like he’s being babied. But it also feels.. nice? He’s warm and Hannibal smells nice and suddenly his voice is floating around Will as he reads something entirely foreign. Will can’t quite place the language, and he doesn’t really want to. He just wants to listen. Not think about the words or what they mean, what language they are. No that’s not important, Hannibal’s voice is. Hannibal’s voice seems to curl around the words and it’s impossibly soothing.

Will would like to stay awake to listen to him but when Hannibal begins to idly thread a hand through Will’s hair, his eyelids start to feel heavy.

Eventually he is lulled to sleep, and he dreams of smooth, comforting voices coming from all directions.

When Will wakes, it is to the smell of something delicious. He thinks some kind of stew.
It smells amazing.
The scent of herbs and vegetables and meat fill his nose, make his mouth water.
He groggily rises and wonders to the bathroom.

When finished he walks into the kitchen and feels warm inside when Hannibal’s eyes land on him and give him a soft smile.

“There you are, feeling rested?” He says gently, like you might do after a child has had a nap.
Will fights with the urge to say something about it, but he doesn’t. Seeing as he did in fact let Hannibal tuck him in, read to him, and then get his food ready while he slept. He supposes he is indeed acting childish, and he isn’t sure how to feel about it.
Should he be embarrassed? Hannibal doesn’t seem to mind. In fact he looks quantifiably cheery as he potters around Will’s kitchen.

Once the food is prepared, smelling divine and looking a little too fancy in Hannibal’s plates on Will’s old worn table, they both sit to eat.
Will can’t help the noise that escapes him as he takes the first bite. It’s heavenly. And Hannibal was right - just what he needed.

Hannibal watches him eat a few more bites before he starts his own. But Will doesn’t mind, he’s gotten used to Hannibal’s need to watch and receive satisfaction from knowing that people are enjoying his food.

When the delicious stew is finished, Will sits quietly at the table for a while.
But as Hannibal begins to gather the plates for washing, Will asks,

“Can we have dessert?”

It’s his home. He knows there’s ice cream in the freezer. HIS ice cream. Of course he can have some for dessert. He can’t understand why he would ask Hannibal for permission. But the question slipped out anyway.
Will looks down at the table and frowns slightly as he tries to process his own thoughts, but by then Hannibal has given him a small smile and is getting the ice cream out of the freezer.

“Of course.” He says cooly, like it’s his decision. Will supposes it is, he gave him the opportunity to make it his decision.

After Hannibal has made Will’s basic ice cream look as fancy as he can - by adding cherries and fruit sauce - he sets the two dessert bowls down in front of them and they eat.

Hannibal’s company, a full tummy, well rested after his nap, and clean from his shower.

It’s the best Will has felt in days.

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